

# Oral Histories of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association A.ORH

Oral Histories of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association  
1957-2015

## Title Statement

Oral Histories of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association A.ORH

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## Publication Statement

**Publisher:** Archives of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association

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Mount Vernon, VA 22121

Telephone: 703-799-3600

URL: <https://archives.mountvernon.org>

October 2018

## Profile Description

**Creation:** This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2024-11-15 07:14:08 -0500.

**Language Usage:** Description is written in: English, Latin script.

**Descriptive Rules:** Describing Archives: A Content Standard

## Descriptive Summary

### Unit ID

A.ORH

### Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/56

### Unit Date

1957-2015

### Language

English .

### Extent

2.5 Linear Feet 2 Hollinger document boxes, two media boxes

### Repository

Archives of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association

## Administrative Information

### Conditions Governing Access

Oral history recordings of the Regents or Vice Regents and the President CEO (previously the Resident Director or Executive Director) are restricted for 30 years per the Association's policy. Other interviews are open to research, except in cases where the subject has indicated a preference for a wait period before release. Until the recordings are digitized, the transcriptions (when available) will remain the best way to access an interview. The library reserves the right to restrict access to physical media for preservation purposes.

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## **Preferred Citation**

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## **Biographical / Historical**

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union was founded in 1853 by Ann Pamela Cunningham. The purpose of the Association was to purchase Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington, in order to restore the property and open the grounds to visitors and admirers who desired to see Washington's house and tomb. Ann Pamela Cunningham became interested in the preservation of Mount Vernon when her mother, traveling down the Potomac River in 1853, saw the house in its neglected and dilapidated state and wrote to her daughter of its condition. Both women thought it shameful to allow the first President's home to fall into ruin. A determined Ann Pamela Cunningham assembled twenty-two women of like mind together to raise money to purchase the property, pay off all debt, and return the gardens and grounds to the condition in which they were left by Washington himself. John Augustine Washington III, George Washington's great-grandnephew and the owner of Mount Vernon at the time, delayed several years in selling the home to the Ladies' Association. He preferred a sale to the State of Virginia or the federal government, both of which declined purchase. In 1858 he finally agreed to sell Mount Vernon to Ann Pamela Cunningham and the MVLA for \$200,000. The MVLA is the owner and executive board of Mount Vernon. Membership is made up of one Regent and 20-30 Vice Regents, each from a different state. All MVLA members assemble twice a year in April and October for Council, where they hear motions and reports concerning projects or issues at the estate. The Vice Regents also divide into committees focused on different functions and operations, and rotate members every few years. Today the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association is remembered as the first organization dedicated to historic preservation in the United States, and as innovators in the field of preservation. The Association remains loyal to its original goals, the restoration and care of Mount Vernon, and educating people all over the world about George Washington's life and legacy. Mount Vernon is open to visitors 365 days a year. The estate now consists of not only the Mansion and tomb of Washington, but restored gardens, outbuildings, Pioneer Farm, Gristmill, Distillery, museum and orientation center, the National Library for the Study of George Washington, gift shops, food pavilion, and the Mount Vernon Inn restaurant.

## **Scope and Contents**

The oral histories collected by the MVLA and the Washington Library include personal memories and reminiscences of previous Regents, Vice Regents, and Mount Vernon employees. Much of the collection was recorded during the 2000s-2010s by staff members Sandra Robinette and Mary Thompson. This collection grows and accrues more recordings every year as other long-term employees and Board members contribute their stories. Mount Vernon's oral histories were often recorded via audio tape, some of which were then transferred to CD. The most recent interviews were digitally recorded and are only accessible in that format, or via the transcriptions. The date range of this collection is 1983-2021, but it is consistently updated.

## **Related Materials**

- Audio/Visual Collection of the MVLA - Papers of the MVLA - Publications and Printed Material of the MVLA - Papers of the Superintendent and Resident Director - Papers of James Rees

## **Arrangement**

The collection is described alphabetically by last name. Transcriptions are also arranged alphabetically. Physical media, audio cassettes and CDs, are arranged in separate boxes according to format.

Box 1 - Audio cassette recordings Box 2 - Compact disc recordings Box 3-4 - Transcriptions (alphabetical)

## **Description of Subordinate Components**

**Alexander - Hope Powel Alexander, Vice Regent for Rhode Island**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/39682

**Unit Date** May 7-8, 2007

**Text** Box 1

**Creator** Alexander, Hope Powel, 1925-2019

**Allison - Margaret Appleton Allison, Vice Regent for Washington**

**Unit ID** 2024-A-019

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/39710

**Unit Date** May 31, 2024

**Audio** Archives (Digital file)

**Creator** Allison, Margaret Appleton

**Bishop - Mabel Livingstone Bishop, Vice Regent for Oregon**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/38945

**Unit Date** October 4, 2005

**Text** 3 (box)

**Creator** Bishop, Mabel Livingstone, 1925-2007

**Bolton - Mary Peters Bolton, Vice Regent for Ohio**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15132

**Unit Date** January 24, 2007 - January 25, 2007

**Audio** Box 1

**Audio** Box 2

**Text** 3 (box)

**Language** English.

**Creator** Bolton, Mary Peters

**Scope and Contents**

Interview of Mary Peters Bolton on January 24th and January 25th in 2007. Interviewed by Sandra Robinette. Includes 2 transcripts, 2 CDs, 1 CD transcript, 2 cassettes, and photographs.

**Call - Nancy Morse Banning Call, Vice Regent for California**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15136

**Unit Date** February 26, 2008

**Audio** Box 1

**Computer Disks** Box 2

**Text** 3 (box)

**Language** English.

**Creator** Call, Nancy Banning

**Scope and Contents**

Interview of Nancy Morse Banning Call, Vice Regent for California, 1984-2001, on February 26, 2008. Interviewed by Sandra Robinette. Includes 3 transcripts, 2 cassette tapes, and 1 transcript CD.

**Collins - Mary Call Darby Collins, Vice Regent for Florida**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15163

**Unit Date** November 17, 2005

**Text** 3 (box)

**Language** English.

**Creator** Collins, Mary Call Darby, 1911-2009

**Scope and Contents**

Interview of Mary Call Collins, Vice Regent of Florida, 1961-1982. Interviewed by Kathi Ann Brown on November 17, 2005. Includes transcript only.

**Dawson - Kenny Dawson, employee**

**Unit ID** 2019-A-023

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/22881

**Unit Date** August 23, 2019

**Audio** Archives (Digital file)

**Creator** Dawson, Kenneth

**Scope and Contents**

Oral history of Kenny Dawson, Mount Vernon security officer, August 23, 2019. Interviewed by Mary Thompson. Digital recording available upon request.

**Dodd - Reba Dodd, employee**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15148

**Unit Date** September 18, 2001

**Audio** Box 1

**Text** 3 (box)

**Language** English.

**Scope and Contents**

Interview of Reba Dodd who worked at Mount Vernon for 38 years. Interviewed by Mary Thompson on September 18, 2001. Includes transcript and cassette tape.

**Embrey - Lee Embrey, employee**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15160

**Unit Date** September 29, 2011

**Audio** Box 2

**Language** English.

**Creator** Embrey, Ernest "Lee", Jr.

**Scope and Contents**

Interview of Lee Embrey on September 29, 2011. Includes 2 CDs.

**Funderburk - Charles Funderburk, employee**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15149

**Unit Date** July 31, 2000

**Audio** Box 1

**Text** 3 (box)

**Language** English.

**Creator** Funderburk, Charles F.

**Scope and Contents**

Interview with Charles Funderburk who worked on the house staff for 48 years. Interviewed by Mary Thompson on July 31, 2000. Includes transcript and cassette tape.

**Guy - Frances Claiborne Guy, Regent and Vice Regent for Virginia**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15153

**Unit Date** August 28, 2006 - August 29, 2006

**Audio** Box 1

**Audio** Box 2

**Text** 3 (box)

**Language** English.

**Creator** Guy, Frances Claiborne, 1921-2016

**Scope and Contents**

Interview with Frances Claiborne Guy, past Regent (1976-1982) and Vice Regent for Virginia (1963-1995), elected Vice Regent Emerita 1995. Interviewed by Sandra Robinette on August 28th and 29th in 2006. Includes 3 transcripts, 3 cassette tapes, and 2 CDs.

**Hagner - Adlunia Hagner, Vice Regent for the District of Columbia**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15155

**Unit Date** October 20, 2000

**Audio** Box 1

**Text** 3 (box)

**Language** English.

**Creator** Hagner, Adlunia Sterrett, 1916-2007

**Scope and Contents**

Interview of Adlunia (Lummy) Hagner, Vice Regent for D.C. Interviewed on October 20, 2000 by Clare Edwards, Vice Regent for Connecticut. Includes 2 cassette tapes, 1 transcript.

**Hanks - Mary Hanks, Regent and Vice Regent for Wisconsin**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15157

**Unit Date** 1956

**Audio** Box 2

**Language** English.

**Creator** Hanks, Mary Esther Vilas, 1873-1959

**Scope and Contents**

2 CDs titled Remembrances of Mary Esther Vilas Hanks, Regent 1943-1948. These CDs are copies of the originals in the Hanks Family Papers at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

**Heiberg - Anna Heiberg, daughter of superintendent Harrison Dodge**

**Unit ID** AV\_00033 - AV\_00037

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/14786

**Unit Date** 1965

**Language** English.

**Creator** Heiberg, Anna Howell Dodge, 1877-1967

**Scope and Contents**

Five magnetic reel-to-reel tape recordings of Anna Heiberg's reminiscences. Heiberg was the daughter of superintendent Harrison Dodge. Recorded twice with only small differences between each. Five tapes total, each 7" reel, 2 track mono, 3 3/4 ips.

**Interview with 4 Regents (Ellen Walton, Carew R. Lee, Mabel L. Bishop, Eugenia M. Seamans)**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15161

**Unit Date** February 27, 2003

**Audio** Box 1

**Audio** Box 2

**Text** 4 (box)

**Language** English.

**Creator** Walton, Ellen Carroll

**Creator** Lee, Jane Carew, 1931-2019

**Creator** Bishop, Mabel Livingstone, 1925-2007

**Creator** Seamans, Eugenia Merrill, 1922-2010

**Scope and Contents**

Interview with 4 Regents including Ellen Walton, Carew R. Lee, Mabel L. Bishop, Eugenia M. Seamans. Interviewed by Mary Thompson on February 27, 2003. Includes 1 transcript, 3 cassette tapes, and 1 CD.

**Kearns - Eddie Kearns, employee**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15146

**Unit Date** July 10, 2002

**Audio** Box 1

**Text** 4 (box)

**Language** English.

**Scope and Contents**

Interview with Eddie Kearns at his retirement after 43 years at Mount Vernon. Interviewed by Mary Thompson. Includes transcript and cassette tape.

**Keeler - Sue Keeler, employee**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15134

**Unit Date** May 12, 2015

**Audio** Box 2

**Text** 4 (box)

**Language** English.

**Creator** Keeler, Sue

**Scope and Contents**

Interview with Sue Keeler, interpreter and guide at Mount Vernon for many years, on May 12, 2015. Interviewed by Mark Santangelo. Includes transcript and CD.

**Macomber - Walter Macomber, employee**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15141

**Unit Date** 1983, 1984

**Audio** Box 2

**Text** 4 (box)

**Language** English.

**Creator** Macomber, Walter

**Scope and Contents**

Interview of Walter Macomber, restoration architect, in 1983 and 1984. Interviewed by Kit Young. Includes transcript and 2 CDs.

**Malissa - Dean Malissa, employee**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/25996

**Unit Date** October 30, 2022

**Moving Images** Archives (Digital file)

**Creator** Malissa, Dean

**Scope and Contents**

Oral history recording of Dean Malissa, employee and George Washington character interpreter. Interviewed by Mary Thompson, Research Historian, October 30, 2020. Recorded using StreamYard online service. Audio only and video both available. Contact library staff for a link to the recording.

**McKean - Mary Jane McKean, daughter of Charles Cecil Wall**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/30075

**Unit Date** December 30, 2021

**Moving Images** Archives (Digital file)

**McVee - James McVee, employee**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15147

**Unit Date** June 27, 2000

**Audio** Box 1

**Text** 4 (box)

**Language** English.

**Scope and Contents**

Interview with James (Jim) McVee on June 27, 2000 before his retirement after working at Mount Vernon for 50 years. Interviewed by Mary Thompson. Includes transcript and cassette tape.

**Mosley - Julia Mosely, employee**

**Unit ID** 2020-A-011

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/25998

**Unit Date** September 30, 2020

**Moving Images** Archives (Digital file)

**Scope and Contents**

Oral history recording of Julia Mosley, Director of Retail and Licensing at Mount Vernon. Recorded via StreamYard online service. Interviewed by Mary Thompson, Research Historian, September 30, 2020. Audio only and video recording available. Contact library staff for a link to the recording.

**Newman - Eleanor Tarrant Newman, Vice Regent for Kentucky**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15145

**Unit Date** May 14, 2007

**Audio** Box 1

**Text** Box 2

**Text** 4 (box)

**Language** English.

**Creator** Newman, Eleanor Tarrant, 1934-2017

**Scope and Contents**

Interview of Eleanor Tarrant Newman, Vice Regent for Kentucky from 1985 to 2000. Interviewed by Sandra Robinette. Includes transcript, 2 cassette tapes, and 1 CD transcript.

**Norton - Dean Norton, employee**

**Unit ID** 2020-A-018

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/25997

**Unit Date** October 7, 2020

**Moving Images** Archives (Digital file)

**Creator** Norton, Dean

**Scope and Contents**

Oral history recording with Dean Norton, Mount Vernon Director of Horticulture. Interviewed by Mary Thompson, Research Historian, October 7, 2020. Recorded via StreamYard online service. Audio only and/or video available. Contact library staff for a link to the recording.

**Pettit - Gerald Pettit, employee**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15159

**Unit Date** June 19, 2006

**Audio** Box 2

**Language** English.

**Scope and Contents**

Interview of Gerald Pettit, who worked as a night guard and in the Security Department, on June 19, 2006. This CD is labeled CD#2 and only includes a portion of the interview, approximately 15 minutes long. The rest of the recorded interview is currently missing. Digital copy of the recording available on request.

**Rees - James Rees, President CEO****Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15156**Unit Date** April 10, 2012**Audio** Box 2**Language** English.**Creator** Rees, James C., 1952-2014**Scope and Contents**

Interview with James Rees, President CEO of Mount Vernon by Mary Thompson. Includes 2 CDs.

**Seamans - Eugenia A.M. Seamans, Regent and Vice Regent for Massachusetts****Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15152**Unit Date** September 14, 2006 - September 15, 2006**Audio** Box 1**Audio** Box 2**Text** 4 (box)**Language** English.**Creator** Seamans, Eugenia Merrill, 1922-2010**Scope and Contents**

Interview with Eugenia Merrill Seamans, Vice Regent for Massachusetts, 1975-1993, Regent 1986-1990, and Elected Vice Regent Emerita 1993, with her husband Dr. Robert Channing Seamans. Interviewed by Sandra Robinette on September 14th and 15th in 2006. Includes 3 transcripts, 2 cassette tapes, 1 CD, and 1 floppy disk.

**Thompson - Mary V. Thompson, employee****Unit ID** 2024-A-003**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/39709**Unit Date** January 25, 2024**Moving Images** Archives (Digital file)**Creator** Thompson, Mary V., 1955-**Viebranz - Curt Viebranz, President CEO****Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/22886**Unit Date** September 21, 2017**Audio** Archives (Digital file)**Creator** Viebranz, Curt**Scope and Contents**

Interviewed by Mark Santangelo. Digital recording available on request.

**Wall - Charles Cecil Wall, talk given to Council****Unit ID** AV\_00026**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/14771**Unit Date** October 25, 1976**Language** English.**Creator** Wall, Charles Cecil, 1903-1995**Scope and Contents**

Magnetic reel-to-reel tape recording of talk given by Mr. Charles Wall in 1976 upon his upcoming retirement. Discusses past Vice Regents he worked with and his experiences as Resident Director. 7" reel, 3 3/4 speed, 1 hr. Scotch recording tape case.

**Wall - Charles Cecil Wall and Elizabeth Cooke****Unit ID** AV\_00392**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15418**Unit Date** May 1, 1986**Language** English.**Creator** Wall, Charles Cecil, 1903-1995**Creator** Cooke, Elizabeth Throckmorton, 1897-1993**Scope and Contents**

Two cassette tapes both labeled: CC Wall and Elizabeth T. Cooke, May 1, 1986. Lanier Business Products, Inc. tapes. Note with tapes reads "These tapes are from the evening of May 1, 1986 when Mr. Wall and Mrs. Cooke reminisced about MV, etc." From the minutes 1986, "Mr. Charles Cecil Wall, recently elected Resident Director Emeritus of the Association, was guest of honor at dinner in Bolton. A highlight of the evening was the lively reminiscence led by Mrs. Cooke and Mr. Wall over coffee in the sitting room." p. 50

**Wall - Charles Cecil Wall, Resident Director****Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15139**Unit Date** October 8, 1987**Audio** Box 2**Text** 4 (box)**Language** English.**Creator** Wall, Charles Cecil, 1903-1995**Scope and Contents**

Interview of Charles C. Wall, Resident Director of Mount Vernon and employee for over 40 years. Interviewed on October 8, 1987 by Dennis Pogue. Includes transcript and 3 CDs.

**Walton - Ellen Carroll Walton, Vice Regent for Pennsylvania****Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15138**Unit Date** July 8, 2009 - July 9, 2009**Audio** Box 1**Audio** Box 2**Text** 4 (box)**Language** English.**Creator** Walton, Ellen Carroll**Scope and Contents**

Interview with Ellen Carroll Walton, Vice Regent for Pennsylvania, 1991-2007, on July 8th and 9th in 2009. Interviewed by Sandra Robinette. Includes transcript, 2 cassettes, 1 microcassette, and 1 CD.

**West - Gail Berry West, Vice Regent for the District of Columbia****Unit ID** 2020-A-003**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/22887**Unit Date** February 13, 2020**Audio** Archives (Digital file)**Creator** West, Gail Berry, 1942-**Scope and Contents**

Interviewed by Rebecca Baird. Digital recording available on request.

**Westby - Linda Robey Westby****Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15150**Unit Date** August 27, 2003**Text** 4 (box)**Language** English.**Scope and Contents**

Notes on interview with Mrs. Linda Robey Westby regarding summers at Mount Vernon in the late 1940s-1950s. Interview conducted by Mary V. Thompson, research specialist. August 27, 2003. Actual interview recording and transcript missing.

**Williams - Priscilla de Forest Williams, Vice Regent for New York**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/15154

**Unit Date** August 17, 2000

**Audio** Box 1

**Text** 4 (box)

**Language** English.

**Creator** Williams, Priscilla de Forest

**Scope and Contents**

Interview of Priscilla Williams, Vice Regent for New York, 1975-1994. Interviewed on August 17, 2000. Includes cassette tape and transcript.

**Wiseman - Mary Wiseman, employee**

**Unit ID** /repositories/2/archival\_objects/30076

**Unit Date** July 14, 2021

**Moving Images** Archives (Digital file)